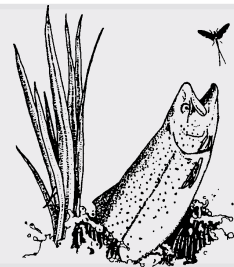


# Stream Advocate



Adopt-A-Stream Program Newsletter

Fall 2002

## PROJECTS FOR RIVER PROTECTION

### Action Ideas from the Toolbox!

To help Stream Teams and other river protection groups implement projects from field-based Action Plans and are looking for inspiration, the Adopt-A-Stream Program has developed a toolbox of project ideas. The toolbox contains fact sheets that provide a description of each type of project, background, how to information, resources and cost estimates.

The fact sheets are designed to be used when planning a Stream Team project, or as ideas for a grant application. For example if your river is affected by polluted runoff the tool box contains information about pet waste education and cleanup campaigns,

riparian buffer planting, car care and motor oil recycling education and stormdrain stenciling. For low flow problems, consider the tool box recommendations promoting rain gardens and rain barrels. In addition, the tool box has suggestions for certifying river friendly businesses and home owners. Adopt-A-Stream is expanding and adding topics to the toolbox. Please send us your ideas and let us know if your Stream Team or group is interested in starting a specific project. Adopt-A-Stream staff can provide fact sheets, assistance for projects, examples of work done by other groups, and suggestions of potential grant resources.

### Developing Public Access on your River

Improving Public Access is an action frequently identified by Stream Teams as a way to increase recreational opportunities. Stream Teams have found that there are different ways to improve public access on rivers and streams.

#### Middleton Stream Team Dedicates New Canoe Launch on Ipswich River

Early this summer the Middleton Stream Team dedicated a new canoe launch and conservation area on the Ipswich River. The Stream Team worked for over a year with town and community partners to cleanup an old asphalt lot and dumping area, and turn it into a attractive canoe launching area with a new gravel parking lot and picnic tables.

The town acquired the land through tax default in 1999. It was used as a cut stone masonry yard until the mid 1960s. After that date, the land was overgrown with invasive plants and covered by debris. This informal dumpsite brought runoff and other problems to the Ipswich River. Under the Massachusetts' Rivers Protection Act the land is not buildable.

The Middleton Stream Team's proposal for a park and canoe area was accepted unanimously by the Conservation Commission in January 2000. The project took 18 months of volunteer labor and inkind donations. Toward the end of the project a welcome cash donation allowed for its completion.

A former landscape architect and member of the Conservation Commission helped measure the site and presented a plan for the park to the Stream Team. In exchange for the right to expand its parking lot 800 feet into the riparian area, an adjacent business paid for the removal of 3000 square feet of asphalt and cement. Local businesses donated time, equipment and graded stone for the parking area, installation of stone steps to the launching area and picnic tables. Volunteers spent countless hours re-

moving invasive multiflora rose and poison ivy from the area and a local Girl Scout troop planted flowers. Transplanted red cedars will grow along the road to block noise.

The new canoe launch and park provides the community with access to the river for fishing and canoeing, as well as an area with improved infiltration and habitat for native plants. At the dedication ceremony the Conservation Commission commended the Stream Team on completion of an outstanding project for the community. It was a great event for everyone who worked on the project to come together and celebrate the completed launching area. The canoe launch was the most ambitious project by the Middleton Stream Team to date. They are continuing to work on several other projects including a canoe landing area downstream, signs at all stream crossings and a public display on watershed education.

#### Working with the Public Access Board

In late-October, Adopt-A-Stream staff member Amy Singler arranged for a representative of the Middleton Stream Team to meet with Jen Wright of the Public Access Board (PAB) for a site visit of a potential new canoe launch. PAB is an agency of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement, which works to enable people who fish and use recre-

*(continued on next page)*

**Year of Clean Water** October 18th was the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Clean Water Act. Congress has declared a "Year of Clean Water". Plan an event to educate your community on how the Clean Water Act is helping to protect our rivers. Highlight the work you are doing for your river. For more information see the website at [www.yearofcleanwater.org](http://www.yearofcleanwater.org).



*New Ipswich River Canoe Launch on Rt. 114 in Middleton. Photo by Katharine Brown.*

*(Public Access continued from first page)*

ational boats, canoes and kayaks to access the waterways of Massachusetts. Access at this second site would open up the opportunity for a 4-5 mile canoe on the Ipswich River from the Route 114 site down to this potential new Peabody Street site. The site meets the requirements of PAB (*see side bar*). Jen explained that PAB would be willing to enter into an agreement with the town to help design and construct the site using PAB funds if the town would agree to basic maintenance of the site. If the agreement goes ahead, it would allow for the Stream Team to dedicate its limited time and funds towards some of the other projects on which they are working, while still completing

one of their major goals. PAB is interested in this potential new project and is impressed with the recently completed 114 site.

If your Stream Team is interested in developing access in your community and would like to arrange a time to meet with a PAB engineer to discuss options for potential canoe launch or fishing sites, please contact either the Adopt-A-Stream Program, or the Public Access Board (617-727-1843).~

### **Working with the Public Access Board**

If a site meets these criteria, PAB will provide design-engineering and contract and oversee the construction. While PAB does build larger ramp sites for trailers, they also work on 'Cartop sites', particularly on smaller rivers. These sites do not have ramps, but are designed for kayaks and canoes. In order for PAB to build a canoe launch the site and water body must

- ◆ be publically owned;
- ◆ have safe access into and out of the water;
- ◆ provide space for adequate parking (usually 4-6 cars);
- ◆ and have a responsible managing authority to maintain the site (often the town or a state agency).

## **SUMMER-FALL STREAM TEAM WORK ACROSS THE STATE**

Streams Teams are continuing to do excellent work all around Massachusetts. This summer and fall, groups have been working to complete surveys on the following rivers:

- ◆ **Weir River estuary** in Hull;
- ◆ **Housatonic River** in Great Barrington;
- ◆ **Belle Isle Marsh** in East Boston;
- ◆ **Quinebaug River** in Sturbridge;
- ◆ **Sudbury River and tributaries** in the towns of Hopkinton and Ashland; and,
- ◆ **Middle River and Leesville Pond Watershed** in Worcester and Auburn.
- ◆ **Mumford River** in Douglas;
- ◆ **Pecousic Brook** in East Longmeadow;
- ◆ **Assabet River and tributaries** in Northborough;
- ◆ **Quinbaug River Tributaries** in Southbridge.

Working with local partners students in **Berkley** and **Taunton** surveyed the **Cotley River**, and students in **Douglas** surveyed the **Mumford River**.

In **Manchester by the Sea** the Stream Team worked with their local watershed association and received partial funding through the Riverways Programs to plant a riparian buffer. The **Friends of Alewife Reservation** also received a Riverways Small Grant to conduct habitat inventories on the reservation. The inventories will be important in the upcoming MDC master plan and to a pending development adjacent to the reservation. The **Middleton Stream Team** leveraged community support to complete a new canoe launch on the **Ipswich River** (*see article on page 1*). The **Cutler Park to Commonwealth Ave Protection Group** applied for a DEM grant to complete work on a blueway trail on the **Charles River**. The **First Herring Brook Watershed Initiative** continues their outreach efforts through walks on Biodiversity Days and helping form an environmental club at a local school. **Friends of the Neponset Estuary** worked to bring out over 75 volunteers for an April cleanup.

**Upcoming Surveys:** A shoreline survey of the **North River** should help determine some of the nonpoint source pollution concerns noted through monitoring by the North and South Rivers Watershed Association. Groups are working on surveys for **Moose Brook** in **Hardwick**, **Four-Mile Brook** in **Northfield**, and **Westport River** in **Westport**.

If you have any questions or suggestions for Stream Teams in your watershed, please call the Adopt-A-Stream Program at 617-626-1549. *Read Stream Teams updates in the Fall Riverways Newsletter for more on the important work Stream Teams are doing to protect our streams across Massachusetts. Available online at [www.massriverways.org](http://www.massriverways.org)*

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## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Has your community passed the Community Preservation Act? As municipalities across the state pass the Act, money will become available for land, open space and habitat protection, public access, historic preservation, affordable housing and other local goals. To help guide the use of that money, citizens and municipalities can use buildout maps that were prepared by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Community Preservation Initiative and newly launched Community Preservation Tools. The buildout maps and analyses show how much—and where—development can occur under current zoning regulations.

Using these tools, a community can see what it will look like when it reaches buildout (when all buildable parcels are built according to current zoning). It can then answer questions like how many more residents could the town have, how many school children does that represent, and what does that mean for community services like water supply, schools, police and fire protection? In addition, communities can begin to see how buildout will effect local rivers, streams and wetlands.

EOEA has recently launched a new website as part of the Community Preservation Initiative. The Community Preservation Website (located at [www.mass.gov/envir](http://www.mass.gov/envir)) provides citizens and towns access to the data that was created as part of the buildout. Now anyone can access community statistics and view buildout maps. It is also possible to look at inter-community buildout information and explore buildout in a regional context.

Two new features make the site a dynamic planning tool—the Fiscal Impact Tool, and the Alternative Futures Tool. The *Fiscal Impact Tool* is software that allows municipalities to evaluate the fiscal impact of different development projects on municipal finances. This can help plan for the consequences of future land

use decisions and can help towns negotiate with developers about the impacts of proposed projects.

The *Alternative Futures Tool* allows municipalities to update their buildout maps and scenarios, and run new scenarios based on changes in development, land protection or zoning. This GIS mapping software can be used to create new buildout maps based on updated information. These two tools, when used together, can be a powerful way to argue for open space and land protection based on reduced fiscal impacts to the town.

How can Stream Teams use this information? (1) Before talking with town officials, review the Community Preservation Tools and brainstorm how they can aid efforts in river protection (2) Discuss the Community Preservation Tools with your local municipal contacts and see if they have received the GIS tools. (3) When there is the potential for a town land purchase, use the Fiscal Impact Tool to calculate the savings generated by keeping that parcel from being developed into “X” number of house units. (As always when towns are considering land purchases, make sure that officials are aware of rivers and of biodiversity issues.) (4) Use the Alternative Futures Tool to advocate for zoning changes or overlay districts in certain parts of town. (5) Encourage your municipal officials to see how growth impacts the rivers, streams and natural resources and to take steps to protect those resources.

The buildout project has been a wake-up call for many towns that did not previously see the consequences of lack of planning for future growth. As a result, many are changing zoning, purchasing open space, preserving historical heritage and providing adequate housing. Preserving town character and quality of life are important to our collective future. Stream Teams can help by advocating for protection of land and water resources. Use these tools and maps to raise important questions about where and what kind of development the community wants and how development can coexist with healthy rivers and streams.

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## NEW LOW FLOW INVENTORY WEBPAGE!

[http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/RIVER/  
rivLow\\_Flow\\_Inventory/home.html](http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/RIVER/rivLow_Flow_Inventory/home.html)

Riverways is happy to announce a new addition to the Riverways Technical Assistance website: the Low Flow Inventory. The inventory was compiled in response to a growing number of reports from citizens about streams and rivers that have problems with low flow in order to assess the extent of the problem and identify common causes that could be addressed at the state-wide level. This website provides access to the fruits of our labor, an ongoing compilation of references, resources, and observations about rivers and streams with low flow problems across the Commonwealth. A summary of issues, references, and resources for each major watershed is available along with general information about the effects of altered flows on aquatic ecosystems.

Also link to the site from the “Technical Assistance” link on [www.massriverways.org](http://www.massriverways.org). Any new observations suggestions or corrections for the site can be sent to Margaret Kearns, Watershed Ecologist, [margaret.kearns@state.ma.us](mailto:margaret.kearns@state.ma.us), 617-626-1533.

## WESTERN STREAM TEAM ORGANIZER

Carrie Banks is now working as a Stream Team Organizer for watersheds in Western Massachusetts, including the Millers, Chicopee, Connecticut, Westfield and Housatonic as funded by the Watershed Initiative. Previously, she interned with the EOEA Deerfield River Watershed Team and DEP Waterways Regulation Program. Last year Carrie worked with Riverways on Storm Drain Stenciling in the Connecticut River Watershed and developed a Storm Drain Stenciling guide for communities and organizations. Carrie brings a background in Human Ecology and experience in watershed planning and river conservation work to this Watershed Initiative Funded position. Carrie grew up along the banks of the Deerfield River, often spending many hours collecting trash and recording the number of river users. Her senior thesis was on river safety recreational issues along the Deerfield River. Carrie looks forward to working with Stream Teams and would like to hear from you. She can be reached at (413) 773-5031 or [river\\_banks@hotmail.com](mailto:river_banks@hotmail.com).

## RESOURCES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**www.H2ouse.org** Take a tour of a virtual house and learn new ways to conserve water, including the "Top 5 Actions" you can take in and around your home.

### Riverways Programs Newsletter Online

Due to recent budget constraints the Riverways Programs Newsletter will not be mailed to home addresses. Instead the newsletter will be available online for reading or downloading. If you would like an email notification of online availability, please sign up on [topica.com](http://topica.com). Send an email to [massriverways-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:massriverways-subscribe@topica.com). Thank you. We hope the new format is just as useful and widely distributed.

### Outdoor Classroom Grants

2002 EOE Outdoor Classroom Grant RFR is out and posted on Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Procurement Access & Solicitation System ([www.Comm-PASS.com](http://www.Comm-PASS.com)). This grant program is designed to encourage and assist schools across the state to develop, restore and/or investigate natural outdoor classroom areas on or near the school property. Secretary Durand's goal is to get students outside for hands-on learning opportunities. There are only 2 grant rounds this year. The first round just ended (9/20-10/23). The second round is from October 22 through December 23rd. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Contact Melissa Griffiths, Director of Environmental Education at 617-626-1114 or if you [melissa.griffiths@state.ma.us](mailto:melissa.griffiths@state.ma.us) have any questions.

The **Adopt-A-Stream Program** works to support and encourage local stream teams and communities in efforts to protect and restore the ecological integrity of the Commonwealth's watersheds; rivers, streams and adjacent lands.

For more information or to receive our newsletter, please contact:

Rachel Calabro, *Coordinator*  
Amy Singler, *Stream Team Organizer*  
Carrie Banks, *Western Stream Team Organizer*

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Also check out our web-site:  
[www.massriverways.org](http://www.massriverways.org)

*Riverways Programs, Joan Kimball, Director*  
*Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law*  
*Enforcement, David M. Peters, Commissioner*  
*Executive Office of Environmental Affairs,*  
*Bob Durand, Secretary*

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